

Light:

A Journal devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity, both Here and Hereafter.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

I am afraid I have shocked Dr. Potter. It is sad, but I shall be the less sorry if the mental shock causes him to strike out for himself a new and more rational, as well as healthier line of thought. His "when a Spirit lifts me and carries me about against my will, I will believe it," is of the same type as the cry of old, "Come down from the cross, and we will believe on Thee." Dr. Potter should know what answer *that* obtained. His conversion, however important to himself, is hardly of sufficient moment to warrant a special interposition of Spirit for the levitation of his body. When Dr. Potter further says that I "practically reject the whole teaching of Christ and Christianity," he is writing that which he has means from my published writings of knowing to be untrue. I do nothing of the sort. But I *do* reject very decidedly the nonsensical explanations of phenomena which Dr. Potter is ignorant enough to put forward: and the calumnious story about Miss Fox, which he heedlessly and recklessly circulates.

The nonsense that newspapers write about Spiritualism and all connected with it is inconceivable. It has pleased Dr. Buchanan, in the exercise of his undoubted discretion, to take unto himself a wife in the person of Mrs. Decker, and I beg to felicitate him on the auspicious event. The *Two Worlds* contains a full description of the interesting ceremony, which was performed by Dr. S. B. Brittan in a manner that was at once simple and impressive. He pointed out that the ceremony, as performed by the Church, was expressly limited to the period of life on this earth—"so long as ye both shall live"—but that the Spiritualist, whose view is not bounded by the grave, regards marriage as "the union of two souls in harmony with the Divine laws of our spiritual being." He appositely quoted St. Paul's words: "Neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God," the Divine love as revealed in kindred souls;—at least as elevating a view of the obligations and privileges of marriage as is usually exemplified in the Belgravian code of morals, as it seems to me. Not so to the *Evening Standard*. In a short article, which compresses into its shortness as much shallow fatuity as I ever saw in the same space, this paper points out to "orthodox persons among our own clergy and others who dally with Spiritualism," that "this latest development of it puts it right athwart of the Gospel declarations that the dead 'neither marry nor are given in marriage,' and the equally explicit declaration of the apostle, 'that a woman is not bound to her husband after he is dead'"—a most remarkable piece of exegesis! Who ever said that the dead do marry? Dr. Buchanan is not dead, or was not at that time, surely! And if the union of these two be of that intimate nature which the Christian ideal of marriage contemplates, is that more or less in accord with the mind and will of Christ and his apostles, than the standard of society, with its necessary adjunct, the Divorce Court? But any stuff is good enough to write about Spiritualism.

In a late number of the *Rock*, the Rev. G. W. Weldon writes a long account of his experiences among the Spirits. The Spirits whom he "tried" were of the "Irresistible" type, and Mr. Weldon was not impressed with their philosophy, nor with

the value of the information afforded by them. It does not seem to have occurred to him that there are degrees of intelligence and development among Spirits, whether in or out of the body, and that "Irresistible" may be doing excellent work without being able to talk philosophy, or even to preach a sermon. It was, however, the denial of some of the most pronounced Christian or rather Church dogmas that led Mr. Weldon to conclude that these Spirits were not of God, but of the devil. He was told that many had been converted by these means "from Atheism and sensualism to a belief in God and to the cultivation of purity and holiness of life." "I know," he says, "that it has been the means of inducing many to believe in the continuity of human life after death. But I also know that I never yet have met a Spiritualist, however removed from his or her past worldliness and infidelity, that acknowledged the supremacy of God's Word as the sole guide of life, or the efficacy of the Atonement as the only means of man's redemption." So that purity and holiness of life in place of sensuality and Atheism are of no account. The animal has learned that it has a soul, and that wallowing in the mire of sensual indulgence is not its fitting occupation. The Christ-life has replaced the animal life. But the priest passes by on the other side. He has no sympathy with a struggling soul that does not profess a dogmatic theology of his own special type. That seems to me sectarian rather than Christian, and Pharisaic rather than Christ-like.

Some of Mr. Weldon's incidents are well told, and may well have puzzled him as they did. He seems to have got his best evidence in the house of "a lady of very high social position, in one of the fashionable squares of Belgravia." She should have imparted a religious as well as a fashionable sanction to the investigation, for she was, as Mr. Weldon naively puts it, "a Spiritualist, *but* a believer in the Divinity of Christ, and a devout and constant reader of the Bible." Surely here was a Spiritualist who answered to Mr. Weldon's theological test of purity! In her house a small room was placed at Mr. Weldon's disposal, who brought his sceptical friends, while the lady provided the medium. All precautions against deception having been taken, the medium was held by Mr. Weldon on one side and by Sir —— on the other "as tightly as possible without inconvenience to him." But the story is best told in the writer's own words: "We are both strong men. The medium was a small man, and by no means muscular; but even if he were, it would have been impossible by sheer force of muscular effort for any man to get away from the fast grip with which we held him. His two hands were kept as firmly bound as if they were in a vice. And yet, strange to say, in spite of all our strength and utmost effort, the medium after a time began to rise out of his chair, and to ascend higher and higher towards the ceiling, till both he and the chair on which he had been seated when the gas went out were lifted up above our heads and planted right on the centre of the table. This was his position when the lights were turned on. We were holding him still by the hands, which we never let go for a moment. He was seated on the chair—a cane-bottomed one—looking dreadfully pale and half dazed. 'Well, Sir ——, what do you think of that?' I asked. 'It puzzles me,' was the reply. 'Yes; and me also,' I added. The strangest part of the proceeding was that the arms of the medium were projecting through the upper opening of the back of the chair, so that by some unaccountable way his hands and arms were inserted through this open portion of the chair, while we were holding him fast all the time! That which added to my perplexity was the fact that the medium, who had his coat on him when the proceedings commenced, was now in his shirt-sleeves, his coat having disappeared, and that too while Sir —— and I were continuously holding his hands."

Mr. Weldon may be excused for his surprise. Another incident is familiar enough to Spiritualists, but is worth quoting

as a record of fact given by an unimpeachable witness. In the corner of the séance-room, before the lights were put out, Mr. Weldon had himself placed a "very large musical box; a large, heavy box, requiring some effort to transfer it to its appointed place." After the incident above quoted "John King" appeared, and the following occurred. Mr. Weldon had been conversing with "John King," when, "to my surprise, the big, heavy musical box, which I myself put into the farthest corner of the room, was carried up into the air, and went circling all about our heads, and then it suddenly fell with a bang on the table. There it remained for a minute or two, while the sound of small bells was heard ringing in perfect harmony and with the most pleasing effect. Then a lady present—not a Spirit—wound up the musical box, and it was instantly carried into the air again, the tune going on all the time. Whilst this concert was being performed between the bells and the box no voices of any kind were heard. That any human hand ever touched that box when lying in the corner I am unable to believe. The medium did not do it, for Sir——and I held him fast bound. There was no other gentleman present, and as to two of the ladies I held the hand of one, and Sir——held the hand of the other. They did not move from their seats; and of the two other ladies one was an elderly lady very delicate and feeble, and the other a young girl who, if she tried, could not carry the musical box across the room without the utmost possible difficulty."

Now these are facts! Let us leave the Spirit-theology alone, for the moment. Surely there is nothing *diabolic* in what Mr. Weldon saw, though there may well be that which is *divine*; for truth, of whatever kind, is a gift from above, though man, when it is new to him, has been singularly consistent in attributing it to the devil. It is time that that unworthy expedient were discarded, and that men learned at length that this bogie is of human manufacture. As Epes Sargent nobly said, "Every fact is a Divine disclosure," a better Gospel, I make bold to say, and a nobler creed, than this evangel of an ubiquitous devil.

M. A. (Oxon).

ORIGIN OF THE FIRST MAN.

To the Editor of "Light."

SIR,—I have been much interested by the perusal of Dr. Wyld's comparison of Buddhism and Christianity in your last number, with the general tenor of which I am disposed to agree, though not prepared to admit to the full extent his disparaging estimate of the former. Especially after reading the able comments by "M.A. (Oxon.)" on Mr. Lillie's work on Buddhism, in the September and October numbers of the *Psychological Review*, I think we ought to suspend our judgment until we have more "Light."

There is, moreover, one paragraph in Dr. Wyld's paper against which I must enter a protest.

In discussing the Darwinian doctrine of evolution, he says that "the idea that man first arrived on this planet as a materialised angel, and afterwards fell into various degradations is the generally received opinion." If by this he means that this is the case with the numerical majority of professed Christians, we can only say, "'Tis true, and pity 'tis, 'tis true."

But among those really capable of forming an unbiased opinion apart from creed and formulae, and excluding, of course, the majority of clergymen, I feel confident that nearly all educated men of the present day reject this doctrine, founded as it is on a myth, and which, besides being contradictory and irrational in itself, conveys an impression altogether incompatible with our ideas of the *justice*, to say nothing of the *goodness* of God.

The first and most obvious objection to the doctrine of the first man being a materialised angel is the statement in the legend that he "was without the knowledge of good and evil"—in other words, that he was without conscience or moral sense—in fact, little, if at all, superior to the brutes, and anything but an angel. Another conclusion, always lost sight of by the orthodox, is that a creature thus constituted was totally irresponsible and incapable of *sin*.

I may add that many writers of note—among others the Duke of Argyll and the Bishop of Manchester, who cannot be suspected of heterodoxy—have lately admitted that this legend is not to be admitted as historically true.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

B.

Any truth, faithfully faced, is strength in itself.

FORMATIVE POWER OF SPIRIT IMAGINATION AND WILL.

To the Editor of "Light."

SIR,—In "LIGHT," 24th December, I have a brief letter on this subject, in which I declare my conviction that some individuals in the flesh can project their souls or spirits as visible objective doubles, and act in all respects as Spirits emancipated finally from the flesh.

In "LIGHT," 14th January, "M.A. (Oxon.)" attempts to shew that my views cannot be demonstrated.

In reply I would ask: If man be a Spirit, hampered by the flesh, why should that Spirit, when it escapes, for a time, from the flesh, not act as if it were an ultimately freed Spirit?

I admit that the Spirit, freed only for a time, is held to the body by a magnetic chain; and as a child held by leading strings, no doubt its actions are so far *restrained*, but no more. It is new to the work, and does it feebly, as is always the case with Spirits on first being finally freed from the body, but, in other respects, I assert that the appearance, action, and power of the double are exactly analogous to those of the Spirits of the departed or the ghosts of the dead.

In illustration I will give one instance which seems to demonstrate the truth of my belief.

Miss J. and her mother were for fifteen years my most intimate friends; they were ladies of the highest intelligence and perfectly truthful, and their story was confirmed by one of the servants; the other servant I could not trace.

Miss J., some years before I made her acquaintance, occupied much of her time in visiting the poor, when one day as she walked homewards she felt cold and tired and longed to be at home warming herself at the kitchen fire.

At or about the minute corresponding to this wish, the two servants being in the kitchen, the door handle was seen to turn, the door opened, and in walked Miss J., and going up to the fire she held out her hands and warmed herself, and the servants saw she had a pair of *green* kid gloves on her hands.

She suddenly disappeared before their eyes and the two servants in great alarm went upstairs and told the mother what they had seen, including the *green* kid gloves.

The mother feared something was wrong, but she attempted to quiet the servants by reminding them that Miss J. always wore black and never *green* gloves, and that therefore the ghost could not have been that of her daughter.

In about half an hour the veritable Miss J. entered the house and going to the kitchen warmed herself by the fire, and she had on a pair of *green* kid gloves which she had bought on her way home, not being able to get a suitable black pair!

This one instance of the double seems to me to demonstrate my proposition; that in *reverie*, or what is most significantly called *absence* of mind, the spirit may pass out of the body and operate as if it were a Spirit finally emancipated from the flesh.

This double turned the handle of the kitchen door, and opened the door, and by its imagination caused its form, clothes, and even the *green* kid gloves to become visible.

The question is often asked: How can clothes have ghosts? and the questioner thinks himself very clever.

Swedenborg says: "The man in the Spirit-world appears in every particular as he appeared on earth, because he surrounds himself with all the forms of his affections, or his prejudices, or his thoughts."

Harris expresses the same idea when he says:—

"In Spirit every thought takes form,
In Spirit every wish is born."

And Bishop Berkeley's philosophy is the same when he says: "The external world is only in the thoughts of man;" and this philosophy, although unsubstantial in this world, is true in the world of Spirit, where the kingdoms of Heaven and of Hell are within you, according to your mind.

In the above case, the imagination and will of the spirit of Miss J. created her form and her clothes, including the *green* gloves, as visible to the two servants.

Believing this to be a true philosophy of Spirit, I find no *a priori* difficulty in believing in the spiritual powers of those trained psychics of the caste called Adepts.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

Dr. J. M. Peebles commenced in the *Great West*, Denver, Colorado, for December 17th, a series of articles to be continued during the year, entitled "Peebles' Pilgrimages," giving an account of his travels around the world.

COMMUNICATING SPIRITS;
THEIR CLAIMS TO RECOGNITION.

By Mrs. A. J. Penny.

"In Genesis 2, ver. 7, we read that when man was formed, Jehovah 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives.' It was not *life* but *lives*—natural and spiritual. When we remember that breath is both spiritual and natural, we understand these expressions. While the bodily lungs breathe the natural air, the spiritual lungs inhale the aura which is the outer sphere of God Himself. And in this sphere all Spirits must live, whether embodied in nature or freed from matter. We may cease to breathe the outer air, and our bodies die. But we still breathe the more vital air of the inner life and hence we merely leave the body, and our life is essentially unchanged. The medium of communication then, between Spirit and Spirit, whether the Spirits be in the flesh or out of the flesh, is this subtle spiritual air or ether which is as substantial to the Spirit as our air is to the body. It has its own laws and properties, the counterparts of the laws and properties of the natural air." . . . "We can thus understand the intimate connection which must necessarily exist between men still in the flesh and Spirits now disembodied. Existing together with us in the same spiritual atmosphere, which is the soul of the natural atmosphere, they have everything in common with us except the matter in which, for the time, we are enshrined."—No. 3 of *Libra's papers on "Spiritual Spheres and Atmospheres"* in *Spiritual Magazine* for 1864.

When I chanced to light upon this passage, looking a few days ago into a number of the *Spiritual Magazine* for 1864, its simplicity and clearness of thought as to the condition of those who have undergone dissolution, roused in my mind a great wish to have the question of the identity of Spirits with the people they profess to be, reconsidered.

Often as it has been discussed by persons most able to give an opinion worth heeding, it seems to me that something more of proximate truth might be gained by approaching the subject from an opposite side; asking ourselves not, Can those who claim to be the Spirits of departed men and women be indeed what they say they are?—but, What is the supposition that we accept as an alternative? What theory have we so adequate for disposing of the so-called dead as to justify our very strong disinclination to believe that they are close at hand, and under certain conditions able to manifest their presence? Reasons for feeling slow to credit the statements of communicating Spirits are too many and too notorious to be worth dwelling upon: the mendacity of a very large class of Spirits, and the apparent weak-mindedness of others, as well as the occasional merging of individual Spirits into a society of which all the members call themselves by one name, tend to baffle attempts at identification in nine cases out of ten. I speak from hearsay, having never wished to be present at any séance, but of second-hand evidence I have had an abundant supply, and for some years past my thoughts have been swaying to and fro on this theme under influence of opposing testimony.

Such authorities as Dr. G. Wyld (in *some* of his arguments), Colonel Olcott, and Madame Blavatsky would have brought my indecision to rest on the negative side if ingenious theory and very powerful argument could overbalance a mass of evidence all pointing the other way; and my object now is to confront the question, "Where do we suppose the dead to be and in what circumstances?" with such witness as I can collect from the few writers whom I believe qualified to answer—writers, I mean, not accredited as inspired in the religious world, and therefore only considered to be authorities by those, fully as devout, to my thinking, who look for inspired teaching, *i.e.*, influx of eternal truth, from mediums who have lived *since* the first century after Christ. And I subject myself to suspicion and ridicule for referring to them as authorities all the more willingly that, less than thirty years ago, I should have thought any one who did so surprisingly credulous and unorthodox. To the inspired writers of our Bible, I do of course primarily refer in my own mind, but so various is the interpretation put on those passages which bear on the subject, that I could not be at all sure of their meaning the same to other students as they do to myself. For instance, the usual deduction from the text, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall lie," I could not for one moment accept, in all its everlasting despair; nor could I share the doubt many say they feel as to whether the Spirit of Samuel was evoked by Saul, or only a delusive representation. It seems to me one of the most unquestionable cases of a "revenant."

It may, I suppose, be assumed that every thoughtful mind has outgrown the extremely childish notion of there being one place for good Spirits and one place for evil,—gradations of each unaccounted for, either sort being removed at death as if to a separate box; yet this, I am persuaded, lies at the root of much popular incredulity as to communication with the departed. And probably even more deeply rooted than this is the obscure scepticism as to what we call individuality of character surviving so great a catastrophe as death. Swedenborg, to whom I refer fully convinced of the veracity of his transmundane report, gives a tolerably accurate account of current opinion among ourselves when he says: "Philosophers who wish to have the credit of possessing more discernment than the rest of mankind, generally speak of the spirit, in terms which they do not understand, for they dispute about them, contending that not a single expression is applicable to spirit, which is derived from what is material, organic, or has extension. Thus, abstracting from spirit every conceivable quality, it vanishes from their ideas and becomes to them as nothing."—"Arcana Celestia," chap. 3, par. 196.

And again: "In the case of one person not long after his decease, I perceived, what he indeed confessed, that although he had believed in the existence of the spirit, yet he imagined that it could only live an indistinct life; for he had regarded the life as being in the body, so that on the life of the body being withdrawn, there would remain scarcely any perception of individuality." Another Spirit after death "acknowledged that in the life of the body he had been perplexed with this phantasy, that the spirit was a mere thinking principle, without organization or extension."—*Ibid*, chap. 4, pars. 443, 444.

And in his "Heaven and Hell" he tells us that Spirits and Angels indignantly "charged him to declare that they were not minds without force or ethereal spectres, but that they are men in form, and see, hear, and feel as perfectly as men in the world."—"Heaven and Hell," par. 77.

Throughout this most interesting book Swedenborg repeatedly asserts that the Spirits of the departed are still in the human form, and from thence concludes that no future resurrection is to be looked for; yet incidentally mentions in another of his works, "On the Last Judgment," that the Lord alone arose as to his body "as well as to his Spirit," ignoring, as it would appear, the Christian's belief that he was the forerunner of redeemed humanity and that in the resurrection of *his* body we have a pledge of man's ultimate resurrection in the body.

J. Böhme makes us to understand very clearly that *no Spirit can be altogether bodiless*; the soul can be, not the Spirit proceeding from the soul, and by soul I mean here of course the first emanation of the human being, which, originating in eternal nature, cannot pass away with time—not what so many writers seem to mean by the words, the *animal soul*, a very other and more recent contingent of humanity. But it is evident alike from Scripture, and all we gather from the testimony and habits of unquiet Spirits, that whatever kind of body they still act and feel by, it is a very unsatisfactory tenement; that they long for the coarse old sheath, having failed to attain to the new life of a perfect and imperishable body. For surely it is not uncharitable to conclude that those who have won to a better organisation are unlikely to cling to the worse, reproducing it as vividly as they can in the old haunts of past existence. As to the nature of those uneasy bodies, I attempt to allay my own curiosity by accepting what Böhme tells of the astral body, and modern writers of the nerve-spirit. May not the nervous system be the body left to us when cumbrous flesh and bones are done with? If it be so, its defencelessness from external influences for want of the protective, pain-dulling, enclosure of a less sensitive organisation is terribly imaginable. And no one who sees or reads much of Spiritists' researches can fail to have observed the seeming weakness of individual Spirits as to maintaining their line of thought or of communication, uninterrupted by aggressive or impertinent intruders. An acute witness of many a séance says: "We have felt amazed, too, at the mercuriality of spirit nature passing from one feeling to another under the slightest provocation, with a rapidity inconceivable to us phlegmatic and skin-coated mortals."—*J. I. Emmet's "Spirit Dialogues,"* p. 42.

And this is one of the common experiences that shakes faith in Spirit identity. A friend or relation may be giving a solemn admonition, and all of a sudden some nonsense is abruptly jumbled in by another Spirit; and the thought is natural that no Spirit worth heeding could be subject to suppression by immeasurably inferior beings; but till we know more of that strange existence where the *inner state* alone forms circumstance and body, place and outlook, are we justified in that decision?

A thought, a moment's apprehension of disturbance, may displace that attitude of feeling which makes *rappo*rt with the communicating medium possible. This passage from Swedenborg's treatise on the Last Judgment, gives, I think, some notion as to the cause of this: "Man's spiritual things which pertain to his thought and will, inflow into his natural things which pertain to his sensations and actions, and in these they terminate and subsist; if a man were not in possession of them, that is, if he were without these boundings and ultimates, his spiritual things, which pertain to the thoughts and affections of his Spirit, would dissolve away, like things unbounded, or like those which have no foundation."—"An Account of the Last Judgment," p. 10.

Agreeing with J. Böhme * as to the comparative powerlessness of disembodied Spirits, Eliphaz Levi observes: "L'âme sans corps serait partout, mais partout si peu qu'elle ne pourrait agir nulle part." ("Histoire de la Magie," p. 111.) † I have myself a quite unsupported idea that in losing the mortal body, we lose not only the restraining enclosure which gives reactive force, but the combined co-operation of a multitude of subordinate Spirits necessarily disbanded at dissolution. But be this as it may, it is certain that the little we gather from communicating Spirits as to "fluidic life," after death fully bears out the expression a Hebrew Prophet attributed to a speaker in Hades to a potentate newly arrived there: "Art thou also become weak as we?" (Isaiah xiv., ver. 10.)

Again, the tenor of the messages brought to the living from invisibles is often so pompously trivial that we think it impossible for our once sensible and keen-witted old friends to offer such truisms in weakly turgid phraseology. But let us imagine for a moment what we should find it possible to say if we could only speak with old friends on the other side of the world from time to time by telegram—letters impracticable, and the intervening history of both parties unknown to each other. I fancy the most seriously-minded, eager for edification, would be apt to say something of well-known warning, or some generality that had nothing novel but strengthened emphasis, while the less grave would content themselves with a merry common-place, and those who suffered more than they chose to avow, would exhibit that anxious averseness to giving any direct information which characterises so many an answer at séances.

One of the most common solvents for the hope that relations and friends recognise and communicate with inquirers is based upon a well ascertained fact duly announced by Swedenborg: "When Spirits come to man they enter into all his memory and excite thence what best suits themselves." ("The Earths in the Universe," par. 13). . . "This Spirits can do most dexterously, for when they come to any one they see in his memory every particular it contains."—*Ibid.*, par. 11.

But, while admitting this, let us also attend to what the same seer has to say about man's own memory after death: "It is evident that man carries all his memory with him into the other world." ("Heaven and Hell," par. 462.) "When man passes from one life into the other, or from one world into the other, it is like passing from one place to another; for he carries with him all things which he possessed in himself as a man, so that it cannot be said that death deprives man of anything truly constituent of humanity, since death is only the separation of the terrestrial body. The natural memory also remains, for Spirits retain everything which they had heard, seen, read, learned and thought in the world, from earliest infancy to the conclusion of life; but, since the natural objects, which are in the memory, cannot be reproduced in the Spiritual world, they are quiescent, as is the case with man in the world when he does not think from them: nevertheless, they are reproduced when the Lord pleases." ("Heaven and Hell," par. 461.) "Everything which man thinks, wills, and speaks, or which he has done, heard, or seen, is inscribed on his internal or spiritual memory: but whatever is received into the spiritual memory is never blotted out, for it is inscribed at the same time on the Spirit itself, and on the members of its body, and thus the Spirit is formed according to the thoughts and acts of the will."—*Ibid.*, par. 462.

One need not pause to think if the love of parents for children, of wives and husbands, and brothers and sisters, or strong affection for any human being is inscribed on the

spiritual memory: surely if anything is, that must be. But Swedenborg further explains: "The external or natural memory, so far as regards all ideas which are derived from materiality, time, space, and all other things which are proper to nature, does not serve the Spirit for the same use which it had served man in the world; because when man in the world thinks from the internal, sensual, or intellectual principle, he thinks naturally and not spiritually, but in the other world he is a Spirit in a spiritual world, and therefore he does not think naturally but spiritually. Hence it is that the external or natural memory, as to all material ideas, is quiescent after death, and that nothing which man imbibed in the world by means of material things is any longer active, except what he has made rational by reflective application to use. The external memory is quiescent as to everything material, because material ideas cannot be reproduced in the spiritual world."—"Heaven and Hell," par. 464.

Now when we find repeated well authenticated instances of unseen beings who claim relationship with present people, communicating facts to prove it which could not have been found either in the memory of the medium or the thoughts of any one present, is it not going out of our way in the search after truth to refuse such evidence and say, "Still it cannot be the one we have lost! it must be some deluding Spirit"? The delusion, as it appears to me, is effected by our own obstinate superstitious belief that death entirely changes character, and removes as much from presence as from sight.

The theory by which I reconcile the assertions of Swedenborg, quoted above, is this: for want of a plane suitable for the continuance of its earthly impressions, the memory of a departed Spirit is quiescent, closed up in his interior life; but the peculiar nature of a medium, re-intromitting the Spirit's perceptions to an earthly plane, may restore consciousness of past conditions, and reopen the hidden store of material impressions by which alone he can communicate with beings still involved in matter; just as a forgotten dream is occasionally recovered by the chance mention in society of something which gives the clue to its effaced pictures.

This wonderful power of mediumistic men and women to serve as a channel for intercourse between the visible and invisible worlds has been simply and forcibly described by Swedenborg: "Neither Spirits nor Angels, by their own sight, can see anything that is in the world, for to them mundane or solar light is as thick as darkness. In like manner man by his bodily sight cannot see anything that is in the other life, for to it the light of heaven is as thick darkness. Still Spirits and Angels, when it pleases the Lord, can see things in the natural world through the eyes of men; but this is not granted by the Lord, except to those whom He permits to speak with Spirits and Angels, and to be together with them. It has sometimes happened that through me they have seen their friends, with whom they had been intimate when in the body, altogether present as before, at which they were amazed. Wives have seen in this manner their husbands and children, and have wished me to tell them they were present and beholding them, and to inform them of their state in the other life. This, however, I was prohibited from doing, for the reason that they would have called me insane, or have thought my information a delirium of the imagination. I was well aware that, although they admitted with their lips, they yet denied in their hearts the existence of Spirits, the resurrection of the dead, and their living among Spirits, and these being able to see and hear by means of man."—"On the Earths in the Universe," p. 135.

There is another statement of Swedenborg's which I cannot but think qualifies his assertion as to the effaced memories of material life, or rather postpones its validity until some time after dissolution. He tells us that "man passes through three states after death before he enters either Heaven or Hell." "The first state of man after death is like his state in the world because he is still in externals." "He knows no other than that he is still in the world, except when he adverts to the circumstances which occur to him, and remembers that at his resurrection" (from death) "the angels told him he was then a Spirit." ("Heaven and Hell," par. 493.) The context, interesting as it is, exceeds the limits of quotation, and concludes thus: "The first state of man after death continues with some for days, with others for months, and with others for a year; but it seldom endures with anyone more than a year, and the duration is determined in every case according to the agreement and disagreement of the interiors and exteriors." ("Heaven and Hell," p. 498. See also Swedenborg's treatise "On the Last Judgment," p. 17.)

* "No Spirit can subsist in its perfectibility without the body, for as soon as it departeth from the body, it loseth its government or dominion. For the body is the mother of the Spirit in which the Spirit is generated, and in which it receiveth its strength and powers; it is and remainth a Spirit when it is separated and departed from the body, but it loseth its rule, dominion or government."—"Aurora," chap. 26, par. 52.

** "The soul without the body would be everywhere, but everywhere so little that it could not act anywhere."

The testimony of Mr. T. Lake Harris is somewhat similar. "When a man enters the world of Spirits, after the old fashion of physical decease, it is but leaving one room for another; his earthly memory remains as before, there being a continuity of recollection; but when he is finally fitted for the heavenly eternity and enters into the light of Heaven the old natural memory sinks into entire quiescence; there is no continuity of recollection in the conscious memory, from present eternity into the past earthly time." ("The Hely City," p. 10.)

When we come to visible manifestations at a séance, however strong the likeness may be to deceased friends, there appears to me to be no ground whatever for supposing that in those simulacra the persons themselves are seen; and yet, to my thinking, there is quite as little ground for supposing that such individuals are not present. What is called materialisation *may* be the work of Spirits skilled in deception, fond, as Böhme* assures us all evil Spirits are, of "jugglery," but I cannot see why it may not be quite as possible for friendly Spirits, wishing to convince us of their presence, thus to represent it. That it is an effect of formative imagination on their part (not ours), I have long supposed from the transiency of such appearances.† We know that we can conjure up a face or a scene in our chambers of imagery for a few minutes, but to retain it there is not possible; the incessant movements of thought efface such ideas as quickly as one wave overflows its precursors. So, I fancy, do the vivid imaginations of the dead, when with matter abstracted from the medium, or other people present, they depict their former similitudes. Something, too, may be affected, as Madame Blavatsky says ("Isis Unveiled," vol. I., p. 70), by deputy elementary Spirits effecting the same purpose.‡

In the context Madame Blavatsky repudiates the idea of the disembodied manifesting themselves because "their *divine essence cannot materialise* what is matterless and purely Spiritual." To which I readily agree, but she assumes a great deal more than I can even suppose when she talks of the disembodied being *matterless and purely "spiritual."* I fear that is a condition few attain immediately after decease—if they do long afterwards.

(To be continued.)

THE POWER OF HEALING.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—'Mid the numerous claimants to healing power—one of the greatest gifts bestowed upon man for the benefit of human beings—allow me to mention, not only from my personal experience, but from that of a very extended circle, the great power for healing which Mr. Younger, of 23, Ledbury-road, Bayswater, possesses. To a naturally healthy physique, kept so by a strictly pure and upright life, is added a rare genuine sympathy. I have sought his aid for those in deepest distress of mind and body, and met with that quality of practical sympathy which at once graces the giver and consoles the recipient. I have consulted him for my own evidently failing health, and am fain to confess that I was never more ably treated, nor have I ever received from any one greater kindness. Mr. Younger is about to commence a series of mesmeric sittings at his own house for the instruction of those interested in the science of mesmism. I need scarcely add to all intending students or observers that this peculiar study stringently demands a sound head and pure heart. Without these, dangers are frequently quite unavoidable, but those who would learn its highest uses may find in it an ever developing source of interest and usefulness.—Truly yours,

98, Lancaster-road, Notting Hill, W. A. S. SLATER.
January 16th, 1882.

Better the chance of shipwreck on a voyage of high purpose than expend life in paddling hither and thither on a shallow stream to no purpose.

* "Indeed, this is still to this day their greatest joy that they can transmute themselves, and bring themselves into many images; and thus achieve or make Phansie."—10th *Theosophic Question*, par. 2.

+ See par. 14 of chap. 14, "Sur les Fluides" in "La Génèse" of Allan Kardec, for a very interesting and instructive account of this process.

† "Every so-called materialisation—when genuine—is either produced (perhaps) by the will of that Spirit whom the 'appearance' is claimed to be but can only personate at best; or by the elementary goblins themselves, which are generally too stupid to deserve the honour of being called devils. Upon rare occasions the Spirits are able to subdue and control these soulless beings, which are ever ready to assume pompous names, if left to themselves, in such a way that the mischievous 'spirit of the air,' shaped in the real image of the *human Spirit*, will be moved by the latter, like a marionette, and unable to either act or utter other words than those imposed on him by the 'immortal soul.'"—"Isis Unveiled," vol. I., p. 68.

SPIRITUALISM IN CALCUTTA.

Seances with Mr. Eglinton.

(From the "Indian Mirror.")

While Theosophy is engaging the attention of our countrymen in the Western Presidency, Spiritualism has begun to stir up the minds of the most respectable and intelligent classes of the citizens of Calcutta with unquestionable manifestations of a power, the mystery of which is still unfathomable. Some leading Native gentlemen, who take a deep interest in Spiritualism, have, at some expense, brought over Mr. Eglinton, who, though young, has already acquired a world-wide reputation as a physical and materialising medium. This gentleman, who has recently arrived in Calcutta, has already held three séances, during which he has given undoubted proofs that he really possesses the powers he professes to be gifted with. The first séance was held at the house of the Honourable Maharajah Jotendro Mohun Tagore, C.S.I., when, with a view to prepare the minds of his sitters gradually for the mysterious wonders he is capable of exhibiting, Mr. Eglinton, though his hands were held on either side by two gentlemen of the highest respectability and intelligence, caused, through some agency which certainly could not have been material, a luminous cross on a dark ground, as of black velvet or broad cloth, to appear in the air; then a harmonium, which, when the sitters took their places in the light, was some ten or twelve feet apart from them, to be brought by the same means to within two feet of them; and finally, *mirabile dictu*, the same instrument to be played upon. The house of Babu Dinobhundu Mullick was the scene of the two subsequent séances; and no sceptic could possibly have doubted that the things he saw and heard could have been effected by other than immaterial agency. Not only was an organ played upon by invisible hands; and—though Mr. Eglinton, to prevent any suspicion of his being a ventriloquist, kept some water in his mouth, which he afterwards spat out in the light—the sitters distinctly heard articulate sounds spoken connectedly and sensibly by invisible voices, which, he said, belonged to his Spirit guides. To the surprise of the whole party, whose character for respectability and intelligence is absolutely unquestionable, the materialised form of a Native lady then appeared; and this lady, whose face was partially visible, a gentleman who was a sitter, solemnly assured the party that he distinctly recognised as his mother. But these things were done in darkness. Still, it is impossible to doubt that they were done in absolute good faith and without the least help from accomplices. The crowning feat then followed. Mr. Eglinton, then in the clear lamplight, tore off an end of a blank card, giving the rent piece to one gentleman to keep securely under his thumb, while he passed the card with the point of a black lead pencil, which he broke off with his teeth, to another gentleman, whom he desired to place the card and the bit of pencil within a book on which he was resting his hands. The sound of writing was distinctly heard by every sitter from within the book. But some disturbance in the conditions necessary in these séances, quite unsettled Mr. Eglinton. Rather than lay himself open to the imputation of practising fraud, he cracked a card towards a window within the room. Shortly afterwards he asked the gentleman who had placed the first mutilated card into the book under his hands, to take it out, when, to the surprise of all, it contained part of the letter written at the dictation of the departed Spirit of a distinguished relative of a most distinguished member of the séance—the continuation of this letter being found on the card thrown near the window.

Mr. Eglinton has come out under the most distinguished auspices, and would have received no countenance if he had not given undeniable proof of his wonderful powers. Already his reputation has spread; and we hear that he lately held a séance at the house of a high public officer at Howrah, where some judges of the High Court were present. It should be known that Mr. Eglinton has not come out to exhibit his powers to the outside public, but only to a select few of the higher and more intelligent classes upon whom no imposture can be possibly be palmed off. We are almost sure that before long he will succeed in dispelling any doubts that may rest on the minds of people, who have not inquired into the subject, as to the reality and good faith of Spiritualism as practised by true Spiritualists. Milton, who was certainly not superstitious and weak-minded, tells us—

"Millions of Spiritual creatures walk this earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their séances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return Postage.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may be obtained direct from our Office, and also of E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

Our Correspondents will greatly oblige us if they will take care, in every case, to write on ONLY ONE SIDE of the paper.

Subscriptions for 1882 are now due, and should be forwarded to our Office without delay.

APPARITION OF THE LATE CZAR.

(Translated from "Licht, mehr Licht," of January 1st.)

The following ghost story is communicated to the *Silesian Gazette* from St. Petersburg:—

"For some days past there has been current in this city a wonderful report, which your incredulity would prevent my repeating to you were it not that it is increasingly prevalent in the highest circles of society, and is thus instructive as characteristic of the Russian Court. It is, that the dead Emperor appears every night in the Casan Cathedral. One of the watchers there is said to have first seen him, and to have forthwith reported it to the senior priest. The latter watched one night, saw the same apparition, and mentioned it to his Bishop. The Bishop went to the church in the evening, and waited several hours before the high altar. Adjoining this is the so-called Emperor's door, through which only the Emperor and the ecclesiastics have access to the altar; and near the door is a picture of the Virgin, believed to have miraculous virtues, the tradition going that it was not made by the hands of man. It was formerly in Moscow, but when the French occupied that city it was removed to St. Petersburg, and afterwards placed in this church. It is one of the most revered relics of the Russian Church, and is enclosed in a gold frame, the jewels, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds of which represent a value of millions (of roubles).

"After waiting some hours, the Bishop was convinced that it was all imagination on the part of the watcher and the priest, when all at once the Emperor's door slowly opened, and the dead Emperor entered, dressed in full parade uniform, worn just as when he lay in the coffin. The Bishop advanced some steps to give him a benediction, but the Emperor motioned him away with his hand, and stepping up to the before-mentioned picture of the Virgin, knelt down before it, and remained for a long time absorbed in prayer; he then left the altar by the same way by which he had come.

"I tell you the whole story as it is not only related, but entirely believed, in the best society. In all social circles one hears of nothing but this apparition, and the most extraordinary conclusions are quite seriously deduced from it.

"It is observable that the Cathedral, by order of the Metropolitan, is closed from six o'clock in the evening, and no one obtains admission. The servitors of the Cathedral are strictly forbidden to indulge in conversation about the apparition."

The *Spectator* thus notices "M. A. (Oxon's)" book, "The Higher Aspects of Spiritualism":—"M. A." pleads for the importance of Spiritualism, and its teachings as regards Revealed Truth, and attempts an apology for its existence. At the same time, he protests against the indiscriminate identification of it with impostures that have been carried on in its name. To enter into these questions would be beyond our present purpose, but we may say that the writer argues his case with considerable power.

THE DIVINING ROD.

Your correspondent "E.T.B." asks for authentic instances of water finding, and in reply I send you the following account of water found with the divining rod on the property of two friends of my own. For the truth of the story I am prepared to vouch. Sir Thomas Whichcote, of Aswarby Park, Lincolnshire, was anxious to find water upon a certain portion of his estate, and had gone to considerable expense and trouble to that end in vain. One of his friends advised him to employ the services of Mr. John Mullins, waterfinder, Colearne, Chippenham, Wilts, merely saying that, though he could not understand or account for the way in which it was done, the man had been successful in his own case, and he begged Sir Thomas to try it. Sir Thomas sent for Mullins, who found an abundant supply within the required area, and saved Sir Thomas from the trouble and expense of some alternative plan which was about to be carried out.

The man's powers were treated with more or less incredulity in the neighbourhood. That water had been found within an area in which the geological formation could give no indication as to where and at what depth it could be found and where the only advice the wisecracs of the district could give was to search blindly till you find it, could not be denied; but it was attributed to chance, to a happy coincidence—in short, to anything rather than to the man or his rod possessing this power. Mullins stayed some days at Aswarby, and a friend of Sir Thomas, Colonel John Reeve, of Leadenham Hall, asked him to bring Mullins over as he wished to find a fresh supply in his kitchen garden. Colonel Reeve had no belief in the man's power and was inclined to treat the whole thing as a joke. Colonel Reeve also was aware that he had the means of applying a test as to the reality of the man's power, from the fact that the older portion of his house was built over an old well containing a copious spring, which was situated directly under the floor of a room occasionally used as a drawing-room. Sir Thomas brought the man over, and the two friends set him to work in the garden, leaving him after a time with orders that a gardener was to be sent to tell them if he was successful. After a time the man reported that he had found water, as was subsequently found to be the case. Colonel Reeve called the man into the house to have some dinner, rallying his friend on his credulity and the man on his presumptive powers. As they were passing through the house Colonel Reeve said to the man: "I daresay you will tell me there is water under my drawing-room floor next." The man tried through the rooms with his stick, and found the water at the spot where Colonel Reeve knew the spring to be.

It is three years since Sir Thomas Whichcote told me the story. Mullins was alive and well then. He is a man in a humble position of life, and charges his travelling expenses and a small fee if successful in finding water.

As to your correspondent's question—whether the indicating power is in the rod or the person—we have no evidence to decide this, I think. Most people who believe in the power of the divining rod would say that the power depends on the rod being held by particular persons. This is very likely the case, but I see no impossibility in the power residing in the rod itself. Certain trees absorb a quantity of water, notably willows and ashes. The latter will drive their thin white roots 50 or 60ft. down a tile drain pipe in search of water. Now, a willow twig recently cut is not dead. We know how cut boughs and flowers revive on being put in water, and it seems to me not impossible to believe that there is a tendency in the willow twig, held lightly in the hand, to bend towards water.—I am, yours faithfully,

P. W.

We have a second paper by Dr. Wyld on Buddhism, which will appear next week.

The friends of Mr. W. G. Haxby will regret to hear of his very serious illness. By the advice of his medical attendant he has become an inmate of the Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn-road, and friends who wish to visit him can do so—in the F ward—on Thursdays, between 3.30 and 4.30, or on Sundays, from 2 to 4.

At the Fortnightly Discussion Meeting at 38, Great Russell-street, on Monday evening next, Mrs. Anna Kingsford, M.D., will give an address, her subject being "Violationism; or, Sorcery in Science." We do not quite gather from the title what the precise nature of the address will be but we do know that Dr. Kingsford is a charming speaker, and will certainly interest her audience. We hope there will be a large attendance.

RE-INCARNATION PROBLEMS.

Permit me to offer the following problems for elucidation by some of your able contributors. The Great Principle of Divine justice having evolved from His own nature souls endowed with His own attributes, and as a consequence possessed of the innate possibilities of progression and unfoldment, He must have certainly designed that there should be an equality of privilege for each individual emanation. If, then, one physical existence can afford all the requisite experiences, why do we find such a dissimilarity of intellectual and spiritual development in human life? Why is it that one individual, while possessing a material organisation no way inferior to his fellow, cannot possibly manifest the same intellectual ability? Why is it that one soul will feel the innermost recesses of his better nature vibrate with exquisite joy during the perusal of the poet's imagination, while another will read the same sublimity of artistic expression with comparative indifference? Take one person to view a masterpiece of art by one of the great painters of the past, and he will rapturously gaze upon the embodiment of the artist's thought, intelligently pointing out the refinement of taste, the loveliness of conception, and the dexterity and skill displayed. Another will question the wisdom and propriety of elevating the author on a pinnacle of fame, because there is no beauty pourtrayed to his unappreciative gaze. Then what is it renders one soul infinitely superior to the other when equal facilities are afforded for a due and legitimate expression of the latent impulses of that divine essence within? Again, is it according to Divine justice that one individual should be introduced to this world under conditions which render it unnecessary for him to manifest concern for the essentials of material life, which allow him, under the special protection of affluence and ease, to rest on his oars and glide gently down the stream, while his compeer soul must gravitate and adapt himself to the circumstances attendant on provident surroundings, where every external influence, instead of refining and spiritualising his nature, tends to drag him deeper into the mire of sensuality and degradation? When these two beings pass to the spheres of immortality, they will, of course, be destitute of that experience of human life which did not come within the province of their observation and realisation. Then, will Absolute Justice elevate the rich man, who has been endowed with extraordinary privileges and blessings denied to the other, and must the poor unfortunate reap the inevitable reward of a mis-spent life, although he was the victim of associations vile and pernicious in the extreme? Nay, if souls be equal in the sight of God, it appears evident that every phase of human life must be practically experienced, or why should He compel man to come in contact with matter at all? If it be really indispensable for every emanation from Deity to measure its strength with matter, what provision can be made for those infants who only inhale the breath of life for a few hours of earthly existence? Others exceed the specific limits of three-score and ten years, and at length pass away to Spirit life richly laden with the invaluable treasures of material life's experiences. How, then, shall Absolute Justice be administered? Will any rational being be disposed to question the wisdom of the Infinite Intelligence and charge Him with committing an unpardonable blunder? No adverse conditions could be encountered in a state of purity and ineffable bliss; therefore the necessity for a change of condition must be abundantly apparent to every impartial mind. Through a succession of human embodiments man becomes master or "lord of creation." When the requisite acquisition of experience has been denied, the soul, having asserted its superiority over all things inferior to itself, will become completely dissociated from its earthly attractions and pass onward and upward, where it will become a creator and dispenser of spiritual blessings to humanity; where there will be possibilities for an eternal unfoldment of attributes similar to the Great Deity of the illimitable universe.

C. E. OYSTON.

Hunwick, Willington, Co. Durham.

SPIRITUALISM IN FICTION.—In the *Argosy* for January, published by Bentley and Son, is a well-written story, "The Spirit Organist of Seville." In the story the Spirit of a blind organist of a great religious house, who had identified himself with the organ of the chapel, came and played as he was wont to do when in the body, and in his accustomed manner, at the Christmas Eve service, some time after his burial. It seems that caterers for the public recognise the tendency of many to Spiritualism, and dress up stories for it which may perhaps be founded on fact.

EVENINGS WITH MR. MORSE.

A large circle again assembled on Monday evening last, at 38, Great Russell-street, to meet Mr. Morse. A variety of questions were handed in, of which three were selected to be put to the first Control.

1.—What degree of responsibility attaches to, and what compensation, if any, is there, here or hereafter, for a person who, owing to hereditary moral or physical imperfections over which he has no control, has less power than the bulk of his fellows, if he is not totally unable, to resist successfully temptation to evil?

The substance of the reply was to the effect that the responsibilities are mostly felt on earth, and that compensation comes mostly when the sufferer is removed from earth. In this world, actions are taken account of, and, as a rule, causes are excluded. The law does not take notice of causes, and takes no cognisance of congenital inheritance. It may be strongly argued that the responsibility for much evil of this kind attaches partly to the community, to its legislators and reformers. Humanity might be born under better circumstances than it is. The life of many is a painful struggle against the inevitable. When these die, the world says it is well rid of such pests. But the world must be asked: Why did it permit such pests to come into it? Then the question comes: What is the compensation for the load of such disadvantages? It must be borne in mind that wrong-doing is *not* the normal practice of the soul. This must be laid down firmly and emphatically. The converse also holds good. Right-doing is the normal action of the soul. The compensation to the individual comes when he is placed where right-doing has a fair chance and opportunity. But every individual must work. No kind of spiritual development is obtained except by work. No fruit can be gathered that is not laboured for. There must be a painful struggle up the hill of perfection until all the ground is conquered which ought to have been conquered while in the world. The responsibility of the individual is self-culture; nothing can get rid of this; and compensation lies in the consciousness of achievement and of the conquest of difficulties.

2.—The present life is generally viewed as one of training and preparation for the life to come, and there are presumably many matters which it were better should be learned in this world rather than in the next. If this be so, then in what manner and to what extent is a person disengaged who dies at a very early age?

"There is a great difference between one person who dies at an early age, and another who dies at an advanced age, but who has neglected his opportunities. Early death is not only a disadvantage, but it is a contravention of the design for which the individual came into the world. That practical experience and development has not been gained, which is intended to be learned from life in the world. In such cases, the life in the next world has to be at first the development up to the point which would have been gained had the life been extended on earth, but those who have neglected their opportunities have to suffer greatly from penitence and remorse when they realise what they have done. There is no crime so serious as the misuse of life."

3.—In view of promoting the best and promptest results, how do you advise the presentation of the evidence for Spiritualism among the scoffers, the indifferent, and, still harder, among theological bigots?

"The indifferent are best left severely alone. With scoffers, wholesome reproof is one of the safest methods in skilful hands. But both classes are of doubtful value, and as a rule are best left to themselves. Theological bigots are very hard nuts to crack, and the kernel, when got at, is often so shrivelled as to be valueless. Scoffers are not to be complained of; they are often useful. But the real work lies outside such opposition. The spread of spiritual truth is of far greater importance than the spread of the mere truths of Spiritualism. It is of much more importance that the preachers and teachers should be animated by a spiritual tone of thought, than that they should merely be convinced of certain facts and phenomena."

The "controlling Spirit" said that before leaving, he should like to revert again to the question of this life as a preparation for the next. He strongly deprecated, as neither creditable nor useful, the idea that such preparation should be confined to "once a week." No such lazy method of procedure should be allowed. Those who strive most work best. The best life is that which unfolds most of the mental and moral qualities of the man. No one can get another to do his work for him. The life

worth living is one of actual practical work and usefulness, and it is such a life that is the best preparation for another.

The "Strolling Player" having assumed control, the following question was asked:—

What is your form of language? If none—as we understand the term—how do you interchange ideas; and if there be a form of speech, how do you converse with those of different nationality to yourself?

"A great deal of nonsense is often talked about this question of language. Suppose you were to take one of those poor little street Arabs home with you, and talk to him about Newton, and Bacon, and Locke, how much would he understand of what you were saying? His vocabulary at best extends to only about a thousand words. He knows hardly anything. Well, he becomes a Spirit. He still knows hardly anything, and until he has been Spiritually educated he hardly understands anything. You are all more or less in the position of street Arabs. Hence it is the case that in the lower stages of the Spiritual world, men think, work, and suffer in the tongues they were trained in. But under all forms of speech there are ideas. If, therefore, you could express the idea of hunger by a form, it would be intelligible to all, because the feeling of hunger is the same in all. There is what I can only call a sort of 'ideography,' by which ideas common among all people can be conveyed, and when you understand that, you can converse independent of separate languages."

When we ardently desire anything, and it is kept from us, and we afterwards find that it would not have been good for us, has some angel held back, so to speak, the gift, or is it by virtue of the strength in ourselves which repels what would have been bad?

"A little of both. It depends on the circumstances of the case, and the development of the individual. I could enlarge on this, but this is the substance of what I could say in reply."

Please state the condition of animals in the other life. Are those who have been domesticated with us individualised, and again our companions?

"I have never met with particular animals again individualised, though I have heard others say that they have. My belief is that a sort of memory of animals they have known clings to some people, and they identify individual animals with such 'memographs.' In certain sections of the Spiritual world there are lower forms of life, which, for want of a better term, may be called animals. I am told this on very good authority, but whether they are produced by the will-power of those who are there, I cannot say. A world entirely bereft of what is called animal life would be rather a dreary one to some people."

A question was asked as to whether the occupations of the controlling Spirit were the result of free choice, or was he under the direction of others, and did he report results?

He replied that he did not act under direction, but in concert with others who were wiser than himself, and that he was a member of a brotherhood which had definite objects in connection with the Spiritual movement which is going on in the world.

In reply to a question as to the best method of developing mediums, it was said: Decide what kind of mediumship is desired, or find out what the medium is best fitted for, and treat any communicating intelligences as if they were sensible human beings like yourselves.

The "Strolling Player" offered to vary what he called the "monotony" of the proceedings by a little fiction, and proceeded to give "a tale," "A Domestic Tale." In the form of a history of a father, mother, son, daughter, and younger son, he satirised some of the ideas of society; as to choosing a profession for the son irrespective of natural qualification, and marrying the daughter for money or position, and shewed the happy results that ensued when the different tastes and pursuits were at last naturally and harmoniously developed.

The next evening with Mr. Morse will be on Monday, the 30th inst., at 7.30.

Duty only frowns when you flee from it; follow it, and it smiles upon you.

"The time has come indeed for development of the better and higher truths and principles of Spiritualism, so that we get it into our 'hearts' as well as 'heads,' and become more reverential, recognise the sacredness of truth and Spirit intercourse, understand things, and *Spirituality*, worship, and love; employing the power and knowledge that Spiritualism gives us to lead good and useful lives, and to help each other forward to a higher plane of moral and Spiritual purpose and attainment."

—E. W. WALLIS. *The Two Worlds.*

DIFFICULTIES OF INVESTIGATION.

The following is from the pen of a lady whose opinion carries great weight with all who have the pleasure and advantage of her acquaintance. By such she will be readily recognised by the signature "C. D."

"I do not think that persons accidentally brought together are likely to gain, by experiment, knowledge belonging to things of the Spirit; which are found manifested in as many degrees of externality and internality as there are minds to receive them, or bodies through which they must be brought out.

"It is quite clear that the medium through whom all kinds of physical phenomena are readily manifested, must be differently constituted from the medium through whose brain or mind valuable truths can be conveyed from the world of spirit to the world of matter, from inner to outer. It has been found, indeed, that the two kinds of phenomena are seldom, if ever, exhibited through the same organisation; or if some of the more material occur at the outset of the medium's career, they soon disappear, and more internal (*i.e.*, higher) ones take their place.

"We all acknowledge the great value of the material phenomena, and our obligations to those mediums through whom they appear. But, having once established the certainty of facts which prove the power of Spirit over what we call *mat'er*, the medium by whom this good work has been done will turn to other circles where he is wanted, and a new medium of different intellectual capacity and bodily constitution will be required in his place.

"And here comes the difficulty. As every Spirit can only convey the truths that the medium can transmit, in the language of the medium, using his ideas as symbols or images, it is absolutely necessary, in the communication of ideas above the run of average intelligence, that the medium's mind should not be half taught or full of vague notions. It were better for it to be like a child's—or almost a blank.

"But, supposing the fitting medium found, the next difficulty will arise in the formation of the circle itself. Every member of this should be in perfect harmony, morally and socially, with every other member, and if he have any difference in opinion it ought not to amount to strong disagreement. There should be perfect harmony and confidence between the circle and the medium, and they should, if possible, be on the same intellectual level. Such a circle cannot be formed except by a few intimate friends, and under very unusual circumstances.

"For receiving messages the greatest requisite is the truthfulness of the medium. I know many mediums in private life whose general statements could not be relied on, and the wildest fictions about persons and things have been given through their mediumship. Others, who are simply truthful and good, convey messages which are found correct. But these true right-minded mediums lose the power, after a time, of conveying earthly facts. They are raised to a higher degree, or rather become more internally developed; in which case their utterances, being in symbolic language, will be liable to any or all of the disturbances arising from imperfect education and from the conflicting elements of thought in the circle.

"Some of the difficulties in the way of Spiritualistic associations, which in this respect are unlike other scientific societies, arise from this impossibility of experimenting beyond a certain point. All that Spiritualists can do (as it appears to me) is to make known to the public those authenticated facts of which they are at liberty to speak, and to keep a record, not necessarily for publication, of those things which are at present obscure, but which bear upon the higher truths relating to our inner life here, which will become our external life in the next stage of progress.

"It was not without good reason that the religious mysteries of Egypt and Greece consisted of the esoteric and exoteric degrees.

"C. D."

WHAT BOOKS TO READ.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will some of your readers kindly state, from their own experience, what are the best books on Spiritualism to offer to a person who holds the orthodox faith and has a firm belief in a future state? Such minds do not want accounts of séances. They are already convinced of a future life. It is necessary to approach them with a proof of the value of Spiritualism to Christians. Is Crowell's Book on Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism the book? It should approach the subject from the religious side. Are there any good pamphlets? Any replies will be acceptable to,—Yours truly, FRITZ.

PROFESSOR RAY LANKESTER.

It must ever be interesting to Spiritualists to know what other people think of Professor Edwin Ray Lankester. Here is what *Truth* says about him:—

"He is a very clever man, well-informed on a variety of subjects—and utterly disappointing. A conversation with him makes you long for the society of a healthy fool, provided the fool had never seen a laboratory or a microscope. The Professor is an incomplete formation. He would be a far pleasanter man, not if he knew less, but if he knew just a little more. At one entrance of his mind wisdom will for ever be quite shut out. The Professor has himself locked the door, and keeps the key in his medicine-chest. He himself laughs at the theologian who would measure the Universe by the rule of the Thirty-Nine Articles. But it has never occurred to him that his own little table of cut-and-dried scientific postulates is just as unsatisfactory an explanation, by itself, of all the wondrous things in earth and heaven. He would honestly endeavour to cheer a friend lying racked with pain on a bed of sickness, by reading him a chapter of Huxley's 'Manual of the Anatomy of Vertebrated Animals.' A man who had lost a mother or a sister, he would exhort to be of good comfort; for matter was eternal, and the deceased relative's remains would still have their use in the economic system of nature. Knowing nothing of the lore of Augustine and Chrysostom, of a Kempis and Tauler, of Herbert and Keble, he entertains for it that contempt which becomes a candid inquirer after truth. He cannot understand people who are dissatisfied with materialistic theories of life. What on earth do they want? he wonders. That the poor creatures want something which is not on earth never enters his mind. They bore him, especially as they are apt to ask impossible questions, while he is elucidating the neatest and newest of theories. Mr. Lankester did a good work when he exposed the impostor Slade, but those who know him best suspect he would have been much angrier had he discovered that person to be in possession of certain real powers. He disliked the seer *in posse* more bitterly than the charlatan *in esse*. He was anxious to combat the supernatural, and disappointed to find only the natural. His true home would be in the France of to-day. His anti-clerical zeal and his entire freedom from a variety of social prejudices, still respected in slow old England, might have rendered him a favourite with Belleville itself. As it is, under considerable disadvantages, partly of his own creating, he has won himself a distinguished position among English men of science while still in his seventh lustre."

On one point we must express our dissent from what *Truth* has said. Professor Lankester did not expose Dr. Slade. He only succeeded in enlisting public prejudice on his own side against phenomena which neither he nor they were willing to accept. On *Truth's* own showing, Professor Lankester's judgment is blinded by prejudices and foregone conclusions.

THE WORLD-SOUL.

"The doctrine of a Soul of the World, otherwise called the Mundane or Universal Soul, must be acknowledged of very ancient date, as old at least as the Ionic philosophy: and seems to have been generally embraced by the most eminent sages of antiquity. They held it eternal, immutable, completely wise and happy, extended throughout the universe, penetrating and invigorating all things, the maker of the world and all creatures therein, the fountain of sense, life, and motion, from whence the souls of men and animals were disperced, and after dissolution of their bodies, absorbed therewith again, and they gave it the appellation of God." * * * "But I apprehend the Mundane Soul originally was not intended to be understood of the Supreme Being, but a created God, dependent on Him for its existence and faculties, produced from everlasting by His almighty power and good pleasure; and though it was supposed the maker, it was not supposed the creator of, all things, but to have formed the world out of pre-existent materials according to a plan assigned it." * * * "I think offence cannot be taken against our ascribing the generation and sustentation of the world to a created Being, as it seems rather to raise than depress our ideas of the Divine Majesty; and everything done by the deputy commissioned for that purpose is always esteemed the act of the Principal. The very expression commonly used, that God made all things by His Word, warrants our supposition of an intelligent agent who should understand and obey the Word when spoken; and those writings which speak of supernatural effects many times declare them performed by the ministry of an inferior hand."—Abraham Tucker's "Light of Nature Pursued," vol. 1, chapter on the Mundane Soul, pp. 400 and 414.

I cannot attempt to explain mysteries which are far beyond my comprehension, but this most sober-minded philosopher of the last century may partly satisfy the demand of "Student." From seers, whose perceptions in the unseen world give more direct knowledge, I think I could gather information that might interest him more, and bring the subject into clearer light: but it takes time to select the most brief and intelligible quotations.

The question, "Would there not then be a higher and a lower God?" can only be met by the larger truth with which alone we can harmonise these conflicting statements in Holy Writ, viz.: "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (*Isaiah* xliv. 8.); and again, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me" (*Isaiah* xlvi. 5.); with our Lord's re-assertion of David's "I said ye are gods; if he called them gods unto whom the Word of the Lord came, and the Scripture cannot be broken" (*John* x 34, 35); and St. Paul's "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many)." (*I. Cor.* viii. 5.) The pressure of this paradox cannot be relieved until we acknowledge God to be in every sense infinite,—the abyss from which every world, and every creature in all worlds, *primarily* originate, and from which nothing can sever as to creaturely dependence, though from felt sympathy and support, anything can—even an angry thought. Abraham Tucker, with the cheerful superficiality of his day, seems hardly to face the difficulties which this acknowledgment involves, his Mundane Soul being a submissive agent, only carrying out the Divine will. What dismays us, looking a little deeper into the animus of Nature, is the evidence of antagonism, of fierce rebellion, and desire to frustrate the purposes of mercy *within the universal embrace of an omnipotent source of all being and all creaturely power*. And, to the best of my belief, Jacob Böhme alone can offer any adequate solution to this terrible enigma.

A. J. PENNY.

January 14th.

EVENINGS AMONG THE SPIRITS.

"M. A. (Oxon.)" in his "Notes by the Way," refers at some length to a contribution made by the Rev. G. W. Weldon to the pages of the *Rock*, descriptive of several séances at which he had been present. This is how the Rev. G. W. Weldon himself replies to his critics:—

"EVENINGS AMONG THE SPIRITS."

SIR,—Some of the writers who have undertaken to reply to my remarks are evidently very well satisfied with their own powers of perception. There are some people who think that they can see with half an eye what other folks cannot discern with two eyes.

A gentleman has kindly forwarded to me a copy of a correspondence which he had with Professor Huxley. Signor Damiani is a professed Spiritualist, and a very clever man. He undertook to place £500 in the bank, if Professor Huxley would do the same, the entire amount becoming Professor Huxley's property for any philanthropic purpose if Signor Damiani failed to produce Spirit manifestations corresponding to what I have described. Professor Huxley was to be at liberty to choose his own room—his own friends—in fact, to give him every facility to test these manifestations. The offer was declined.

The correspondents who so flippantly dogmatise as to the absolute certainty of my having been taken in by means of genuine trickery seem to forget that of the six persons present at the last séance all of them were my own friends. Would they deliberately lend themselves to fraud? Would they be likely to employ "hired accomplices"?

These four ladies and the only gentleman besides myself who was present are persons of unimpeachable veracity. They are, moreover, not easily deceived. They went there for the express purpose of testing the whole affair; there was no possibility of collusion. The medium could not speak Swedish. No trickery could possibly enable a man to converse fluently in a language he had never learned. For a quarter of an hour one of the "Spirits" talked with one lady, an intimate friend of mine, in that language, and another lady present who heard the conversation, and who knew just enough of the language, translated it for me.

If this Spiritualism be imposture, then millions of people are duped. Some of the most honourable and honoured names in England must be seriously damaged in reputation, for they have vouched for the facts again and again. I have seen a good deal of life, have travelled over three-quarters of the globe, and I am not so deficient in perceptive power as not to be able to detect a clumsy trick such as some of your correspondents suggest.

I fully believe in the reality of the phenomena. They are not in all cases the result of fraud. If they are "spirits," they are not those of the deceased, but impersonations, as I think, conducted by some malign agency. If they are not spirits, then the phenomena must be the result of some occult science not yet understood.—I am, &c.,

G. W. WELDON.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON, Goswell Hall—Sundays during January and February: GLASGOW. March 8; STAMFORD, March 12; NOTTINGHAM, March 19; CARDIFF, March 26. For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalton, London, E.—[Advt.]

INSTANTANEOUS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LONDON AND CALCUTTA.

To the Editor of "Light."

SIR,—“Trident’s” objections to the newspaper test, whether satisfactory or not, do not apply to my request for the confirmation of the alleged instantaneous communication between London and Calcutta, which the writer of the letter in London could give if there be any truth in the account. If he does not confirm it I, for one, shall believe it to be an instance of either trickery or self-delusion.

Why did “Trident” drag in certain theological doctrines which have no immediate connection with the matter before us? When he asks whose reason is to be the judge of the truth of these doctrines, I ask, in reply, who is to be regarded as the infallible authority which is to impose an unquestioning faith on all the rest of mankind? If “Trident” says that these doctrines were conveyed by Spiritual agency, I shall answer that as, by his own showing, there are evil Spirits as well as good Spirits, some of them may really be attributable to the machinations of the former. For my own part, I am most anxious to be convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, if there be any truth in it, but having, to my great joy, escaped from the cramping and unhealthy confines of orthodox Christianity—after a long and hard struggle between the prejudices engendered by educational training and the enlightenment of science and reason—my ardour would be checked if not destroyed if I had to take the vomit of my old superstitions with my new Spiritualism.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

[Mr. Meugens, on whose testimony we gave the account of an instantaneous communication between London and Calcutta, is certainly not a man who would lend himself to any trickery; and is just as little likely to have been imposed upon. Cannot “An Anxious Inquirer” see that on the other hand there may be substantial reasons why it is impossible that the person by whom the letter was written in London should publicly testify to the fact?—Ed., “LIGHT.”]

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

The Spiritualist.

The editor, in an article upon “A Blot in Buddha’s Life,” raises a point which will no doubt provoke discussion:—“Mr. Edwin Arnold,” writes the editor, “in his beautiful poem, ‘The Light of Asia,’ has placed Buddhism before the public in the most attractive possible manner, but neither from him nor from any other admirer of the great religious teacher of Eastern nations, have we ever heard any comment upon a dark feature of Buddha’s life, assuming for the moment that he ever lived at all, and that his supposed career is not a myth. He deserted his wife, flung away the wealth of the love of Yasodhara as if it were nothing, and stole forth by night into the world, to seek the unknowable. After many years, towards the close of his career, his wife was allowed to gaze upon him from a distance as upon a vastly superior being. In these days and in this country a man who did the same would be ordered to the treadmill by a magistrate for deserting his wife and leaving her chargeable to the parish. If Buddha saw a better path in life before him, he might at least have urged Yasodhara to tread it with him, and not left her to grieve over his heartless desertion.”

“J. K.,” contributes a series of extracts from ancient Hindoo religious works, and in a closing paragraph urges that “Man should live in accordance with the object of life, strictly adhering to necessities for his physical and psychical well-being, and utterly avoiding all sensual luxuries, the more so if they are costly. The wealthy should first of all provide the necessities of life for the poor; those unhappy, wrongly educated, wealthy people, who indulge in expensive luxuries, are criminally responsible for the misery their thoughtlessness has caused, and the example they set to their less fortunate fellow-beings. Not only is a luxurious sensual mode of life simply an expensive method of acquiring painful diseases, but an indiscriminate pursuit of sensual pleasure can only terminate in extreme misery and bitterness.”

The Medium and Daybreak.

In an article dealing with a controversy between the Rev. A. F. Barfield, of Walsall, and the Rev. F. D. Scammell, of Stafford, arising out of a recent lecture by Mr. J. C. Wright at the first-named place, the editor of our contemporary says:—

“The whole Spiritualistic procedure requires revision, and if the attacks of the preachers can induce such a salutary effect we would applaud them with all our ability. The longer that mediumship is practised, and the more sensitive mediums become, there will be the greater danger in the public exhibition of mediumship, and the subjecting of undeveloped mediums to promiscuous and adverse influences. The unscrupulous hate of the Church parties is an evil to be feared far more than any tangible form of opposition, for it is a subtle psychological venom which, unseen, penetrates the very soul of the medium,

and predisposes to the most lamentable Controls, and danger to the medium from insanity caused by bigoted Spirits. It was the evil-mindedness of clerical persecutors that was mostly answerable for the awful scenes of obsession and punishment which disgraced this country in the days of witchcraft. If mediums be again exposed to the mental criticism and influences of clerical opponents we will have again a similar epidemic, or worse—absolute obsession by demons in numbers of instances. This is an evil we have foreseen for some time, and which we have spoken of before in these columns, and it is a phase of the new form of persecution which Spiritualists have to fear. When it becomes a pitched battle between Spiritualism and the religious factions, to the external pressure of the law will be added the inner fire of spiritual attack and torment.”

The Herald of Progress.

Writing upon “Some Thoughts upon Spiritual Influence,” “R. G.” says: “If this truth of the influence of Spirit over Spirit, be understood, and received, it must of necessity have a great effect on the mind and conduct. If I am sure that a reckless action may injure not me alone, but some other immortal souls, then the responsibility is too great, I must be prudent. And if it can be shown that my prayers and efforts are made useful for the advancement of those that are more backward spiritually, it must encourage renewed effort. ‘We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses,’ and we may rest assured that it is not mere idle curiosity that prompts the Spirit world to watch our every action; but rather a divinely ordained necessity, in which they are all vitally interested.”

“T. C. E.” writes upon “What is Christianity?” and referring to the opinion he has heard expressed that Spirit Controls err in discussing political and social topics at Sunday services, remarks:—“I dissent from this view, for the reason that whenever a voice can say one word that tends to improve the conditions of human life, that word should be uttered, no matter whether it be on politics or any other topic. Nevertheless I am old-fashioned enough in my views to wish that more respect should be paid to the day called ‘the Sabbath day’ and would suggest that our meeting-houses be made to appear more like temples dedicated to the solemn worship of the Most High God than like a dull, cold, discussion room. Warm-hearted folks too often feel on entering our places of assembly as if they were taking a seat immediately under Ursa Minor. This should not be longer permitted.”

The Banner of Light.

In a letter from Warren Chase, a well-known lecturer upon Spiritualism in America, the writer narrates the result of a visit to Dr. J. V. Mansfield—known as the “Spirit’s Postmaster,” owing to the doctor being a medium through whom the Spirits reply to *sealed letters*, written by their earthly friends. The writer says:—

“I sat down and wrote a brief note to each of the following friends. The notes were securely folded and posted utterly out of sight, and I then, through his hand, received a most cordial greeting and characteristic communication from each: Dr. George Haskill, Mrs. H. F. M. Brown, Benjamin Todd, and Mary P. Chase. The latter, my Spirit-wife, was so careful lest a lingering doubt of her identity should remain in my mind, that she cited several instances of our early acquaintance unknown to any but ourselves, and long since forgotten by me till renewed in memory by her. I do not hesitate to say that, under similar circumstances, no candid and intelligent person could fail to be convinced of the origin of such communications. Having known Dr. Mansfield for twenty-five years, and occasionally met him, and always found him a most reliable, honest, and correct medium in every instance where I have tested him, or where my friends have, I am glad to bear my testimony in his behalf.”

The Religio-Philosophical Journal.

The following somewhat curious, and certainly interesting, item is recorded. It is headed, “Cured by Prayer—and Married”:

“The wedding of Miss Lillie D. Tyler, of Damascus, Wayne County, Pa., to Mr. John G. Mitchell, of the same town, took place precisely one year from the mysterious cure of the young lady. Miss Tyler had been an invalid for upwards of six years with a peculiar disease, which kept her confined to her room most of the time. She was treated by eminent physicians from New York and Philadelphia, but in vain. In October, 1880, she heard of a female in Connecticut who cured people by prayer, and to this person Miss Tyler wrote, receiving a reply appointing the 26th of November as the day when Lillie should, with her friends, pray for her restoration to health. The day came, and Miss Tyler was so weak she could scarcely raise her head from the pillow. The company included her family and her pastor, the Rev. Thomas Westcot. At noon they commenced their prayers, and before night the young lady was able to go about the house. As her cure has been entirely effected, she has redeemed the pledge made long ago to Mr. Mitchell, and they were married by the same clergyman who prayed so fervently only a year before for her recovery. The case has attracted wide-spread attention.”

The *Journal* quotes the above from the *Philadelphia Press*.

"The Two Worlds."

The following is communicated by "E. C." and will no doubt be read with interest:—

"In July, 1877, Teofik Pasha, a Turkish General, who at that time was in this country superintending the manufacture of arms for his government, wrote to the *Providence Journal* to say that he had witnessed spiritual manifestations in the presence of Charles H. Foster, and that during one of the séances the following occurred:—

It is well known, he says, my native language is Turkish, or Osmanli, the alphabet of which is largely borrowed from the Arabic. I am an utter stranger to Mr. Foster, never having seen or even heard of him, till this morning, and I know he cannot have known me, or about my antecedents. In my own language, I proposed to this gentleman certain questions, with names, on slips of paper, which were carefully rolled up so as not to be seen or read by him, even were he able to read Turkish; and in an incredibly short space of time I had not only answers to my questions, but these were written in Turkish, and facts were given me, and revelations made, which I am free to confess completely changed my opinion on this subject. The Turkish characters are exceedingly strange to Western ideas and forms of thought; still, with a slight discrepancy, no more than would be anticipated from a person who for the first time attempts to form them, I readily read what was communicated. Mr. Foster observed, that with a little practice he was confident he could readily write all that was required in my language. I own that I was completely surprised, both at the personal information conveyed, and at the manner in which it was given me, viz., in my native language."

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.**DALSTON.**

On Thursday evening last the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism held a tea and public meeting at their rooms, 53, Sigdon-road, Hackney Downs, E., when a very pleasant and enjoyable evening was spent. The arrangements for the tea were carried out by Mrs. J. J. Morse in a manner that gave every satisfaction to the participants, of whom there was a sufficient number present to fill the two long tables that had been arranged for the purpose. After tea the tables were removed and the programme of the evening was commenced, under the direction of Mr. J. J. Morse, the President of the Association. The following ladies and gentlemen contributed to the interest and pleasure of the evening, their several efforts being most acceptably received: Miss McKellar, Miss Grace McKellar, Miss Allan, and Miss Witt; and Messrs. Allan, N. J. Greenwell, F. Everitt, S. Matthews, M. Patterson, A. Whitby, S. Williams, and T. Shorter. The last named gentleman, in addition to a recitation, favoured the company with a short address, which was warmly applauded at its close. Shortly after ten the younger members of the company present engaged in dancing, in which a pleasant hour was spent. The attendance was quite a success, there being present as many as could be comfortably accommodated. So agreeable and enjoyable was the occasion that a strong desire was expressed by many of the visitors, that another such meeting should soon be arranged for, a suggestion which, no doubt, the council will duly consider at its next meeting.

GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday evening last the guides of Mr. J. J. Morse delivered the second of a series of orations, on "Immortality; its Punishments." A brief but comprehensive glance was taken at the various phases of belief as to a future life, its rewards and punishments. To the thinking mind these were shewn to be arbitrary and unjust, and in direct contradiction to the theory of a kind, loving, and Infinite Father. The examination of the supposed defenders and upholders of these old dogmas was conducted in a telling and effective manner, and was greeted with hearty applause. Referring to the controls' own experience of the life "over there," it was contended to be quite unnecessary to wait until we reached the next life for our punishments or reward for our deeds here, as was proved most conclusively by the result of every thought, word, and deed for which we are responsible. Virtue is its own reward; and to that they might fittingly add that vice brings its own punishment. An earnest appeal was made for the more charitable, kind-hearted, and loving treatment of the erring ones, which would have a decidedly more beneficial effect than the customary sting of the lash, and the scornful abhorrence of which they are so generally the recipients. It is utterly impossible to present even a fair outline of our friend Tien's *always* practical addresses, but it is hoped that we shall have the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing them printed in full at no far distant day. The hall was full on this occasion, which argues well for the future. Our friend, Mr. Worthy, read an admirable communication given through his own mediumship.—VERITAS.

CARDIFF.

The usual weekly meeting of the Cardiff Spiritualist Society was held at the Society's rooms, on Sunday last. The chair was occupied by Mr. Sadler, jun., one of the council. After a

reading by Mr. Paynter, the meeting took into consideration the defection of three or four members under peculiar circumstances, and Mr. Paynter having been appointed secretary (*pro tem.*) in consequence of the absence of the hon. sec., the chairman and Mr. Paynter were instructed by the meeting to take the necessary steps for the protection of the general interests of the Society. The minutes were read and unanimously approved of. The meeting subsequently adjourned after transacting other business.—On Sunday, the 8th inst., the pulpit of the Unitarian congregation was occupied by Mr. W. Paynter. The subject of the discourse was taken from the 21st chapter of Revelation, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, for the former things are passed away." The object of the speaker was to establish the fact that the time prophesied had now arrived; that death was no more; that the Unseen by which we are surrounded, peopled as it is by our apparently lost ones, is at once the source and ultimate of our life, the only reality; and that outward things are but a reflection of the truth, and things temporal but a shadow of the things eternal. The opening of the spiritual vision proved that there was no such thing as death, as commonly understood; that our loved ones still lingered near us to comfort and soothe us by their influence; and were waiting the moment when we too should throw off the garments of flesh and be reunited to those gone before, in the only true and real life. There was a large audience, considering the tempestuous condition of the weather.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—Mr. T. P. Barkas delivered a scientific lecture in the hall of the N.S.E.S. on Sunday evening last, the subject being "The Scale upon which the Universe is Built." Mr. Barkas dealt with the subject in his usual popular style—unpretending and lucid—which maintains the attention of the audience, and does not weary them with unnecessary technicalities. The lecture gave the greatest satisfaction, and was fairly well attended. Mr. J. Mould occupied the chair.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday evening last the platform of the Gateshead Society was occupied by Mr. Thomas Dawson, who delivered a short, but earnest and instructive address upon "The New Year of Spiritualism." He pointed out the growth and struggles of the movement from its appearance at Hydesville, and shewed how, through persecution and suffering, notwithstanding the impositions and exposures enacted in its name, this great truth had grown to enormous proportions throughout America, Europe, and the colonies, until it numbered followers by millions. The lecture was well received and much appreciated. Mr. Burton occupied the chair. The committee of the G.S.I.S. desire to express their thanks to the following ladies and gentlemen for their gifts of books to the library: Mrs. Hammarbom, Miss E. Wood, Mr. H. A. Kersey, Mr. R. Cairns, all of Newcastle; Mr. James Robertson, of Glasgow; and Mr. W. Oxley, of Manchester.

WEST PELTON.—Mr. J. G. Grey, of Newcastle, has given two lectures to good audiences on "Spiritualism in general," and a subject chosen by the audience, "Hell: where is it? The Devil: who is he?" The second lecture was especially appreciated by the audience, and was considered one of the best they have heard from Mr. Grey's guides. The speaker had the privilege of performing the interesting ceremony of naming a child, which ceremony he performed in a very pleasing and gratifying manner.—NORTHUMBERIA.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications from Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, A. J. C. (Lucerne), S. E. G., F. A. B., E. W. W., J. D., O. T. G., and several other correspondents, are necessarily deferred for want of space.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really the mass of jugglery and imposture that it suits some people to say that it is, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one, that you may see how séances should be conducted, and of what nature the ordinary phenomena are.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on your own experiences gained in your own family circle, or amongst your own personal friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, of whom half, or at least two, should be of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex. The remainder may be of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance by fresh visitors, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface,

It is not important that the hands of each sitter should touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

It is important that attention should not be too fixedly concentrated on the expected manifestations. To this end engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear.

Avoid anxiety and fidgetiness of all kinds. If you have a medium in your number results will follow in due time, and you cannot hasten though you may impede them. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, break up the circle and form a fresh one. You will probably be able to guess at the reason of your failure, and can eliminate the inharmonious elements and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

If results are obtained, the first indication usually is a cool breeze passing over the hands, accompanied by involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their objective reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

Table-tilting is more common than rapping. If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over but not in contact with its surface. Do not, however, try any such experiment until the movement has become thoroughly assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one person take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

If you are satisfied that a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, request that directions may be given as to the order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs at first, ascribe it to the difficulty that undoubtedly exists in directing the table movements at first with exactitude. Patience will eliminate the source of error, if there be a real desire on the part of the communicating Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence that is separate from that of any person present in the circle, you will have gained a great step.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and as they become thoroughly established, ask that they may be made on the table, floor, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means. Avoid, however, any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. If the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests with the sitters to a very great extent to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded discontinue the sitting at once. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. It will be found that increased light will check noisy and unpleasant manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very serious and solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Endeavour to be animated by a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN'S WORK.—Mrs. Hardinge Britten has promised to lecture on the Sundays of the ensuing months as follows. Any friends in places adjacent desiring week evening lectures, can apply to The Limes, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester:—Sunday, February 22, also 23 and 24, Bradford; 29, Macclesfield. Sunday, February 5, Blackburn; 12, 13, and 14, Newcastle; 19, Liverpool; 26, Sowerby Bridge. Sundays of March and April, Manchester.—[Advt.]

WHO ARE THESE SPIRITUALISTS?

The following is a list of eminent persons, who, after careful investigation, have fully satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism:—

Archbishop Whately; the Earl of Dunraven; the late Lord Lytton; the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain; the late William Howitt; the late George Thompson; Gerald Massey; T. Adolphus Trollope; S. C. Hall, F.S.A.

The late Abraham Lincoln, President U.S.A.; the late W. Lloyd Garrison; the late Hon. R. Dale Owen, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Naples; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of the U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; the late Hon. J. W. Edmunds, sometime Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York; the late Professor Mapes, the eminent chemist, U.S.A.; the late Dr. Robert Hare, Professor of Chemistry at the Medical University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.; Bishop Clarke (Episcopalian), of Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, of the Treasury Department, Washington.

William Crookes, editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, Fellow, Gold Medallist, and Member of the Council of the Royal Society; Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., the eminent naturalist, sometime President of the Biological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; W. F. Barrett, Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge; the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President of the Royal Astronomical Society; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S., long one of the editors of the *Journal of Science*; the late Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; the late Professor de Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society of London; the late Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; the late Dr. Ashburner: the late Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; Professor, Ch. Cassal, LL.D.; Captain R. F. Burton, the celebrated traveller.

The late Emperor of Russia; the late Emperor Napoleon; President Thiers; the Hon. Alexandre Aksakov, Russian Imperial Councillor; the late Prince Emile de Sayn Wittgenstein; His Imperial Highness Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; the late Baron L. de Guldenstübbe; Count A. de Gasparin; the Baron and Baroness von Vay; the late Baron du Potet; Mons. Leon Favre; Victor Hugo.

Professor Friedrich Zöllner, of Leipzig, the eminent physiologist, author of "Scientific Treatises," "Transcendental Physics," &c., whose recent researches in this subject have attained a world-wide fame; Gustave T. Fechner, Professor of Physics in the University of Leipzig, also the author of many volumes bearing on the general subject of Psychology; Professor Scheibner, the renowned teacher of mathematics in the University of Leipzig; W. E. Weber, Professor of Physics in the University of Göttingen, and known as one of the main workers in connection with the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy; Immanuel H. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of the University of St. Petersburg; Dr. Maximilian Perty, Professor of Natural Science in the University of Berne; Dr. Franz Hoffman, Professor of Philosophy, Wurzburg; Dr. Robert Fries, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, the well-known astronomer; and many other members of learned societies in this and other countries, and a vast number of persons eminent in literature, science, and art, and in the ranks of social life, whose names we are not at liberty to mention.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS.—*Licht, mehr Licht*, in its number of May 16th, 1880, gave a letter from the well-known professional conjurer, Jacobs, to the Psychological Society in Paris, avowing himself a Spiritualist, and offering suggestions for the discrimination of genuine from spurious manifestations.

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bed-room. I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation, is absolutely impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to my view and experience, false and one-sided. This my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, Dec. 6, 1877.